

# How I Lifted a \$5-a-Week "Movie Extra" to

## The Divorce Suit of Carle Carlton, the Dramatic Producer, from Edith Day, the Actress, Reveals an Astonishing Story of Love and Stage Triumph—and the Sudden Collapse and Ruin of Her Career in a Night

From Poverty and Obscurity to

Photograph of the Little \$5-a-Week "Movie Extra" Girl—Poor Complexion, Untrained Figure and Lack of Poise.



THE fact that Edith Day married an "angel" might lead to the assumption that the match was made in heaven, despite the angel's impending suit for a worldly divorce.

But along Broadway, where the pretty Edith is famous as a former star of musical comedy, the word "angel" has a very different meaning than is implied by its dictionary definition. The Broadway "angel" has no wings, no halo, no melodious harp. All he needs to attain his title is plenty of money and a burning desire to get rid of it.

Most "angels" finance the whims and careers of their favorites until they are disillusioned or broke, when a new "angel" wings into the white lights eager to supply the motors, diamonds and clothes necessary to his protegee's needs. Some will even build a theatre for their beloved, going to any extravagant extent to win a smile.

The case of Edith Day, however, presents a variation from the usual story. Her "angel" was Carle Carlton, a man wise in the ways of the theatre through his personal production of several recent successes. Mr. Carlton had no illusions concerning the average chorus girl's fight for recognition and success, but he considered Edith as the exception to the rule.

He had "discovered" her, developed her, married her, taught her poise and had enabled her to climb from a five-dollar-a-week job as "extra" in a moving picture company to an eminence commanding a salary of twenty-five hundred dollars a week and a prestige corresponding to her financial success—all in the short space of four years.

And at the crest of her triumph Mr. Carlton says that pretty Edith has turned upon her benefactor so cruelly that she has ruined the career he so laboriously made for her, and come near to ruining his life in the bargain.

The producer's recent announcement of an impending suit for divorce reveals a strange story of a little stage-struck farm girl who became the fated favorite of bon vivants on both sides of the ocean until she became involved in a tragic love affair that ended her husband's happiness and interrupted her career almost overnight.

The story begins in a Broadway booking office four years ago with a tired little girl in wrinkled cotton stockings, a shabby suit and a faded straw hat sitting forlornly in the ante-room, waiting for a job that would enable her to pay her room rent and eat something besides crackers and milk.

The girl was Edith Day. The illness of a chorus girl had given her the opportunity to join a road show in Minneapolis a few weeks before, and she was stranded in New York when the show broke up.

Mr. Carlton walked into the booking office, looking for another producer. His high silk hat, his stick, his distinguished bearing represented importance to the anxious girl. Here was a man who might give her a chance. She shot such a pleading look at him that he hesitated for a moment and then crossed the room to her side.

Mr. Carlton is familiar with theatrical types and knew what the girl's story would be before she commenced to tell it. So he eliminated introductions by simply asking her to have luncheon with him. At the time he was merely curious as to the desperation that had been revealed in that one pleading look.

"But her hunger was so pathetic," he said, "that my heart went out to her. And then, her face was so animated and her chatter so entertaining that I saw great possibilities if she could be properly developed, and I made up my mind she would get the chance she was looking for."



Edith Day and Pat Somerset in Their Vaudeville Act.

Mr. Carlton did not tell his new protegee of her impression on him. He simply took her address, intending to heighten her surprise after he had created an opportunity for her. That night he went to see J. J. Shubert, the widely-known theatrical producer, to see if the opportunity existed in any of the latter's shows. Mr. Carlton himself had nothing suitable for Edith at the time.

Mr. Shubert shook his head. He was sorry, but there were too many young women who had already demonstrated their talent floating about for him to interest himself in an unknown. As a last argument, Mr. Carlton offered to pay Edith's salary anonymously if his friend would give her one chance. At last Mr. Shubert was induced to give Edith a small part in "Follow Me," as Anna Held's understudy at one hundred dollars a week. Mr. Shubert agreeing also to pay her salary.

"Follow Me" was one of the good shows that die young and presently Edith again found herself out of a job with her bright hopes dashed to the ground. Beyond writ-

ing her a curt note to report at the theatre she had not heard from Mr. Carlton, who preferred to study his protegee from the orchestra seats in the theatre.

At this low ebb of her fortunes Mr. Carlton suddenly reappeared for another dinner engagement. He had carefully listed her faults and advised her how to walk, gesture and talk on the stage; how to hold her head to the best advantage; how to get the benefit of the lights in the wings of the stage so that a new lustre was thrown off from her hair; and, finally, told her to report for a part in the "Six Little Widows," which he had obtained for her through the influence of his friend, Lawrence Weber. The new part carried a raise to one hundred and twenty-five dollars a week, and Edith was supremely happy until the "Six Little Widows" followed their six little husbands into an early grave, and she was looking for work again.

To my darling husband -  
made my London success in Irene possible -  
Yours Edith -  
London April 7 1920-

Affectionate Tribute of the Actress to Mr. Carlton Which Accompanied Her Gift to Him of a Gold and Jewelled Cigarette Holder.

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But not for long. At the next dinner engagement with Mr. Carlton he asked her how she would like to become a movie star. Edith gasped, and after the coffee her magician beckoned to a prosperous looking man seated at another table and asked him if he would give her a contract to appear in the moving picture version of David Graham Phillips' "Grain of Dust," then being produced by the Orden Film



Miss Edith Day at the Height of Her Career When Her Salary Was \$2,500 a Week.

Company, with Miss Lillian Walker as the star.

The moving picture man, declined Edith's services for the ingenue role with thanks; so, with a magnificent gesture, Mr. Carlton then and there arranged to buy the company, story, properties, studios, down to the services of Miss Walker, and presented his protegee with a contract to play the part he had selected for her at a salary of \$250 a week. Backed by the prominence he had created for her in his own endeavor, Mr. Carlton then persuaded Cohan and Harris to star Edith in "Going Up," then in the process of rehearsal. After a great deal of hemming and hawing, Edith was given a contract guaranteeing her \$250 a week to start and \$500 a week if she made the show a success. That was in 1917.

The show was a hit from the night it opened. It ran a full year in New York and six months in Chicago, and long before it came to its triumphant close Edith was a recognized star and could command her own salary.

Mr. Carlton began to see her frequently and was as happy as she was at each new triumph. He was congratulatory. She was grateful; and both began to make plans for her permanent success.

After another conference Mr. Carlton decided that now was the time to take his protegee under his own wing. He remembered having attended the try-out of a light comedy, which never reached Broadway—a comedy written by James Montgomery, called "Irene O'Dare." As he recalled it, it offered great possibilities for Edith if it could be revised into a musical comedy.

So "Irene O'Dare" was pulled from the shelf where it had lain for three years, revamped by the author, given a few songs and called "Irene." And in the principal part Edith Day achieved a remarkable success. She adapted herself perfectly to the part and before the first year's run of the show was up her salary was \$1,000 a week and everyone was talking of her success. In the patter of Broadway she had arrived.

At one of her occasional dinner parties with Mr. Carlton after the show had been going almost a year the producer told Edith that he loved her, and asked her what she thought about it.

"Well," said Edith, "I like you better than any man I know—whatever that means to you."

"Let's marry, then," said Mr. Carlton, and Edith agreed.



**THE FIRST ACT**  
Attracted by the Appealing Eyes of the Poor Little "Extra Girl" Waiting in the Outside Office of the Booking Agent, Mr. Carlton, the Prosperous Dramatic Producer, Stops and Becomes Interested in Unknown Edith Day.

the game is a contributing cause to a large number of divorce cases.

The genial host, usually a titled personage, summons his guests—the more the merrier—and times their arrival for the middle of the afternoon.

From the hour of arrival until dinner time everyone tries to get acquainted so that the game may not be delayed after dinner by any further formalities. At dusk the frolic starts.

First, all of the guests are shuffled about so there is no possibility of a social encounter between husband and wife, which would spoil the game for both, according to the rules. Then each couple is handed a bottle of champagne with two straws in it and told to scatter. Thereafter the evening is given over to a glorified game of hide-and-seek, with the assurance that no one will do any seeking.

The object of serving one bottle of champagne, instead of two, is to promote good fellowship and do away with the formality implied by separate bottles. Hosts who mistakenly endeavor to show their liberality by providing a bottle apiece are regarded as old fogies by the vivacious guests, who lose no time in disposing of the embarrassing surplus quart.

It is a very pleasant sight to see the guests lock arms and stroll off in the Summer moonlight to explore the beautiful acres surrounding the palace. Everything seems so idyllic, so poetic. Here is no place for jealousy or any of the baser emotions of humankind; and yet, those emotions creep into the scene very frequently after all.

When Carle Carlton saw Edith Day saunter off with her leading man, Pat Somerset, he became uneasy. Somerset was hardly the man he would have chosen to accompany his wife on an uncharted tour and into dark corners of the castle grounds.

Rumor had involved him in an unsavory mess of two and lately there was talk of his wife, Margaret Renner—the celebrated Canadian actress, suing him for divorce. And it had somehow seemed to him lately that Edith and Somerset went through their stage carousers with more enthusiasm than is called for in a musical comedy. But, on the other hand, to have chased after his wife would have been gravely improper under the circumstances.

Such action on his part would have necessitated an embarrassing explanation and the other guests would have considered it to be an unpardonable breach of etiquette. It is not good form when playing "Beaux and Bottles" to worry about your wife.

So Mr. Carlton postponed his remarks until midnight, when the guests began to reappear. When Edith explained she had been visiting interesting spots about the great estate, Mr. Carlton merely observed that she had time to inspect half the historic spots in England, and did not resume the discussion until they were in their motor, speeding back to London. Then his reprimand was checked by her indignation and he turned his conversation to the scenery.

The following day Edith begged him to avail himself of an invitation to a week's shooting party in Ireland on the estate of another nobleman. Not without some misgivings he accepted, thinking that if there had been any grounds for his suspicions Edith might get another point of view in his absence.

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